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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

40¢

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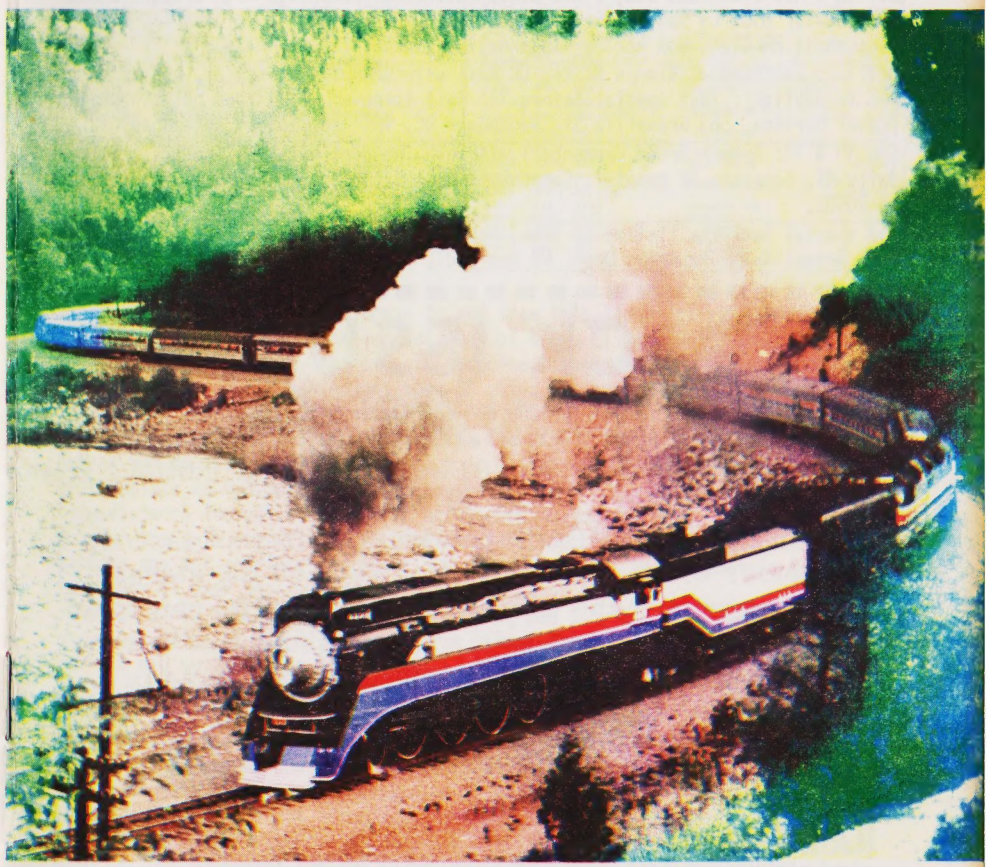
FIRST ISSUE OF
MAY 1977
#153



Au Revoir, 4449

THE COVER STORY:

This issue we present a feature article of unusual length--Peter Putnam Bretz tells us in detail about his encounter with Amtrak's Transcontinental Steam Excursion last month, beginning on p. 7. The cover photo is from a color transparency Pete shot south of Mt. Shasta, California, as the excursion train wound its way northward along the Sacramento River.

Note also in this issue a new article describing a tour of Amtrak's new bi-level passenger cars.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 25: Trolley tour, San Francisco Muni Ry, $10, lv 12 noon. Info: SSAE to Jas. C. Stewart, Excn. Chmn., ERHA of So. Calif., 2439 Fourth St, Apt. 4, Santa Monica CA 90405.

Jul 16 & 17: Bluegrass Ltd, 2 RTs Cincinnati-Danville KY via High Bridge, steam loco ex-T&P 610. Lv 9am, rt 6:30pm. Adult $21.50, kid $20, box lunch $2.95. Cincinnati RR Club, Box 42213, Cincinnati OH 45242. (513) 541-3430 or 471-0530.

Oct 1-2: Vancouver-Kamloops BC RT, CP Rail with CANADIAN equipment. Fraser Canyon in daylight; last special before VIA Rail takeover. $114 incl hotel. Skyline Travel Service, 563 Granville St, Vancouver BC, V6C 1X6 Canada. 604-685-6102.

Sep 10 & 11: French Broad Cannonball, T&P 610, Hendersonville NC-Bull's Gap TN daily RT. Complete SR consist. Cannonball Rail Excursions, Box 2066, Augusta GA 30903.

One special Fantrips listing is free, subject to our editing. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $9.00 per year; single copy 40¢. STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Mailing date this issue: May 24/25, 1977.

TWO TRAIN INAUGURALS SET FOR JUNE

Amtrak's latest "experimental" route, the Portland-Salt Lake City PIONEER, will see first revenue service on Jun 7, with a 3-day inaugural run on Jun 4-5-6 to allow the public to preview the Amfleet equipment. The regular schedule of the train, #25-26, is shown below. The inaugural train will leave Seattle at 9:30am Jun 4, arriving Portland 1:20pm, Hood River* 2:55pm, The Dalles* 4pm, Hinkle* 6:05pm, Pendleton* 7:10pm, and La Grande 10:10pm, where the train will lay over that night. (Asterisks indicate exhibit locations.) On Jun 5 it lvs La Grande at 10am after a 1-hr exhibit, arrives Baker* 11am, Ontario* 1:50pm, Nampa* 3:15pm, and Boise* 4:45pm. On Jun 6 it lvs Boise at 7am, arrives Mountain Home* 8:40am, Shoshone* 10:45am, Pocatello* 1:15pm, Brigham City* 4:45pm, Ogden* 6pm, and Salt Lake* 8:30pm.

Read Down (Local Time) Read Up

The Pioneer

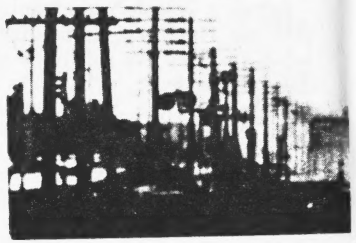
Operates Daily

25			Train Number		26
☒	Km.	Mi.	Type of Service		☒
10 15 p	0	0	Dp SALT LAKE CITY, UT (Amtrak Sta.) (MT)	Ar	8 00 a
11 10 p	58	36	OGDEN		7 05 a
‡11 50 p	92	57	Brigham City, UT●		‡ 6 25 a
2 15 a	276	170	Ar POCATELLO, ID● Dp	Dp	4 00 a
2 25 a	276	170	Dp	Ar	3 50 a
4 10 a	447	278	Shoshone●		2 03 a
‡ 5 30 a	576	358	Mountain Home●		‡12 44 a
6 40 a	650	404	BOISE		11 35 p
7 20 a	682	424	Nampa, ID● (Caldwell)		10 55 p
8 05 a	750	466	Ontario, OR● (MT)		10 10 p
9 15 a	890	553	Baker● (PT)		7 05 p
10 20 a	975	606	Ar LaGrande● Dp	Dp	6 05 p
10 30 a	975	606	Dp	Ar	5 55 p
12 35 p	1094	680	Pendleton●		3 45 p
1 20 p	1144	711	Hinkle●		3 05 p
2 55 p	1302	809	The Dalles●		1 25 p
‡ 3 25 p	1339	832	Hood River●		‡12 55 p
5 10 p	1440	895	Ar PORTLAND, OR Dp	Dp	11 30 a
5 30 p	1440	895	Dp	Ar	11 20 a
6 51 p	1456	905	Vancouver, WA		10 53 a
6 30 p	1519	944	Kelso-Longview		10 15 a
7 18 p	1588	987	Centralia		9 28 a
7 35 p	1619	1006	East Olympia●		9 08 a
8 20 p	1675	1041	Tacoma		8 26 a
9 30 p	1740	1081	Ar SEATTLE, WA (King St. Sta.) (PT)	Dp	7 30 a

In the schedule, solid circles indicate unmanned stations, and "E" indicates flag stops. The PIONEER will be an all-reserved seat train. The Hinkle, Oregon stop was added this month, reportedly at the request of UP, which wants to be able to deadhead crews to and from this important rail junction. A new retarder yard, to be the largest west of North Platte, Nebraska is now under construction at Hinkle. The stop is the closest point to the booming Tri-Cities area of southeastern Washington, some 35 miles to the north. The Pasco-Kennewick-Richland area recently passed the 100,000-population mark, and some officials have suggested a connecting bus from the Tri-Cities to meet the PIONEER. Amtrak was to display its Amfleet cars in Boise on May 20. The PIONEER consist will include an Amdinette car with beverage, snack and light meal service, and long-distance Amcoaches. There is no checked baggage service. Fares range from $65 for the full route to $2 for the shortest leg, Hood River-The Dalles. Reservations are not required for Seattle-Portland travel. Many roundtrip excursion fares for $1 over one-way fare will be available.

Amtrak's new HILLTOPPER will begin running Jun 1, after the MOUNTAINEER ends its operation with the May 31 runs. Amtrak selected a route thru Richmond and Roanoke for the new service (see last issue, p. 3), which will operate between Washington DC and Tri-State Station in Katlettsburg, Kentucky. Amtrak plans to contract for connecting bus service from Amtrak stations in Norfolk and Suffolk to Petersburg to permit Tidewater residents to connect with the train both directions. Amtrak said that because of the strength of travel to Washington and Richmond, patronage is expected to rise from a yearly average of 53,400 on the MOUNTAINEERto 62,800 on the HILLTOPPER, a 17% increase. Amtrak rejected the possible route via Charlottesville because ridership there was estimated at 42,200. Amtrak said that with Amfleet equipment the new train should meet Route Criteria economic tests. Operation of the train is contingent upon successful completion of labor negotiations to permit N&W operating crews to move the train between Crewe VA and Richmond over tracks of the N&W and SCL railroads. The train, to be numbered 34-35, will leave Washington at 2:30pm, Richmond at 4:35, and reach Tri-State at 6:25am, to connect with the RILEY which leaves 7:51am. While the RILEY eastbound reaches Tri-State at 10:02pm, the HILLTOPPER lvs there at 12:48am, reaches DC at 5:10pm.

Urban-Suburban



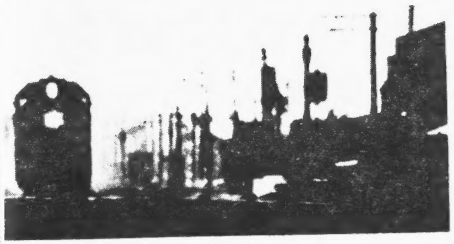
THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC on May 9 asked the State Public Utilities Commission for permission to discontinue its San Francisco-San Jose CA commute service. Few seemed to take seriously a threat of service termination, viewing the action as a political move in the railroad's continuing quest for avoiding financial losses on the commute line. SP says it is losing $10 million a year on the line (in the first quarter of 1977 the railroad reported net income of over $27 million, up 80% from 1976).

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY last month unanimously decided to extend the LIRR's reduced parlor car seat charge thru May 24, 1978. The Board also approved other experimental fare reductions. Starting May 16, train service was extended eastward to Holtsville, Medford and Yaphank because of overcrowded parking conditions at Ronkonkoma.

SHORT-CIRCUITED CONTROL cables in ICG Highliner car 1550 caused about $7000 damage as fire developed at 1:30am on May 3 at the Randolph St. Terminal in Chicago.

PHILADELPHIA'S TRANSIT STRIKE was settled early this month after lasting 45 days.

Transit



WORSENING TRANSIT SERVICE under ConRail mentioned here last issue is countered by the experience of Eastern readers during the recent Philadelphia transit strike: ConRail's Philadelphia and Reading Divisions reportedly carried nearly double their normal passenger loads with no problems and with praise from commuters.

A FARE INCREASE of 10¢ in Philadelphia was blocked by a judge May 13 because public hearings had not been held.

A CROSSTOWN EXPRESSWAY in Chicago, held back 15 years by controversy, has finally been approved in a modified form. Chicago's Mayor and the Illinois Governor came to an agreement in mid-May whereby the roadway would be shortened and some funds would be used for a city subway instead--a 6.4 mile Franklin St. subway which will eventually replace most of the elevated Loop structure.

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, in a May 17 locally-televised Los Angeles Town Meeting, responded to the question of transit directions for the area; he went as far as talking of trolley coaches, but not as far as light rail.

Rail

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION has issued its long-awaited "preferred plan" for restructured Canadian transcontinental passenger service. The plan calls for the present CN and CP routes to continue in daily operation between Winnipeg and Vancouver. East of Winnipeg, CP Rail would run from Montreal to North Bay, where it would combine with a CN service from Toronto and continue westward on CP to Winnipeg. During the summer months, daily service would run on both CN and CP routes from North Bay to Vancouver. During the rest of the year, a tri-weekly regional train would run on CN between Capreol and Winnipeg, with convenient connections at each end with the CP service. The present Toronto-Sudbury section of CP's CANADIAN would be replaced by a daily RDC service, using the CP line from Sudbury to Parry Sound and CN Parry Sound-Orillia-Barrie-Toronto. North Bay waschosen as the meeting point for the Toronto and Montreal legs of the transcon service, instead of the present Sudbury, because fewer problems were involved in that arrangement. The CP station would be used in North Bay. The Commission said it rejected a plan to combine the two transcon trains between Vancouver and Kamloops because of awkward train movements and other problems.

Citizens have until Jun 30 to comment on the plan, and a final, binding plan is then to be issued about Sep 1, with implementation hoped for this fall.

TRANSPORT 2000 EXPRESSED guarded optimism about the CTC Preferred Plan. President Harry Gow said "We are pleased the Commission has accepted public arguments that no duplication of service exists between the rail lines west of Sudbury/Capreol." Mr. Gow was pleased also that the CTC has recognized that sleeping and meal services are not a luxury on a transcontinental train, but a necessity to attract passengers. However, several directors of Transport 2000 expressed disappointment with the inordinately slow schedules and poor service to northern Ontario communities along the CN line. Another deficiency of the plan is the low quality of rail service over the CN route between Capreol and Winnipeg--passengers will be expected to make do with a snack counter on the 24-hour trip. A further inconvenience will be the need to disembark at Capreol and take a bus the 15 miles to Sudbury. A further hardship imposed on residents of Northern Ontario is the discontinuance of the local Sudbury-White River trains.

THE CTC REPORT on transcon service recommends that the transcon trains be re-equipped with new cars within two years from implementation of the preferred plan.

Canada

CP RAIL TRAINS 427-428, RDC cars running Sudbury-Ontario-Sault Ste. Marie had their last runs on May 23, discontinuance having been approved recently by the CTC.

CANADIAN PACIFIC HAS acquired full ownership of the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway. Formerly it was partly owned by Penn Central, Michigan Central, and Canada Southern. The cost of the acquisition was $6.5 million.

THE MARITIME SERVICES will be next examined by the CTC. Upcoming public hearings on these train services will be as follows: Jun 2, Saint John; Jun 6, Fredericton; Jun 8, Bathurst; Jun 10, Campbellton; Jun 13, Quebec (Quality Inn); Jun 15, Montreal (Hotel Loews La Cite). All hearings start at 10am. Transport 2000 on May 17 presented to the CTC a 31-page brief dealing with all aspects of Maritime rail service from scheduling to rolling stock. The group said that major cost reductions could be achieved without the drastic service cutbacks sought by the Federal government. (Under Ottawa's plan, almost all trains east of Montreal and Quebec City would be replaced with buses, a policy introduced in Newfoundland 8 years ago.)

Highlights of the Transport 2000 brief included: proposed restructured schedules for fast direct service between major centres at convenient times of day, e.g., Sydney-Halifax, 3 trains; Halifax-Saint John, 3 trains; Moncton-Halifax, 4 trains. Retention of 3 thru trains between Maritimes & Montreal was urged, on faster timings to allow two all-daylight schedules; reduction in subsidies by taxpayers by at least $17 million, achieved thru increasedridership, improved labour productivity and new equipment designed for higher capacity and simpler maintenance; and retention of existing regional rail services and addition of coordinated bus service to other areas, providing an integrated public transport network throughout the Maritime region.

CN HAS BEGUN newspaper advertising for three of its trains: the SUPER CONTINENTAL, the SCOTIAN, and the OCEAN. Ads refer to the trio as "The three long distance runners." CN calls them "Three legendary trains, as modern as today, symbols of the renewed spirit of train travel in Canada." Singing radio commercials for CN's new Canrailpass have been aired in some Canadian locations.

J. FRANK ROBERTS, president and chief executive officer of VIA Rail Canada, is occupying office space, along with his secretary, at CN's Montreal headquarters, but plans a head office staff of about 150 when the corporation is fully operational in about two years.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Seattle May 14: engines BN 6533, SR 6146, Amt 345 & 376; cars 1160, 1501, 7504, 4853, 4518, 4500, 4506, 4531, 4510, 8102, 8075, 2713 "Pine Cavern," 2715 "Pine Crest," 2233 "Sebring."

*FLORIDIAN, train 57, lv Chicago May 15: engines Amt 292 (E8, black, to Louisville), Auto-Train 4011 & 4010 (Louisville-Sanford), Amt 649 (Sanford-St. Pete); cars 1054 mail Chic-Jacksonville, 4408 "Prairie Sunset" (Chic-Miami), 3802 (to Miami), dome 9453 "Silver Ranch" (Chic-St. Pete), 8008, 2782 "Duval County," 1520 (all to St. Pete); Auto-Train cars 604, 470, 901, 570, 595, Amt power car 1917, car carriers 61, 54, 67, 42, dome "caboose" 460 (all Louisville-Sanford).

*LONE STAR, train 15, Kansas City May 18: engines 512, 600; cars 1118 (Dallas), 1039, 2725 "Pine Lodge," 8036, 3392, 9916, 9929, (to Dallas:) 4811, 4828, 4810, 4821, 2361 "Regal City," dome 9350 (with Amtrak Board of Directors, off at K.C.), ATSF track inspection car 89 (off at Topeka).

*BLACK HAWK, train 372, Chicago Apr 16: engine 598; cars dome 9331, 8310, 5663.

*NIGHT OWL, train 66, Washington May 12: engine 954 (E60); cars 1086, 2642 "Pacific Waves," Amdinette 207-51, Amcoaches 21034, 21844, 21846, power car 1294, mail car 1102.

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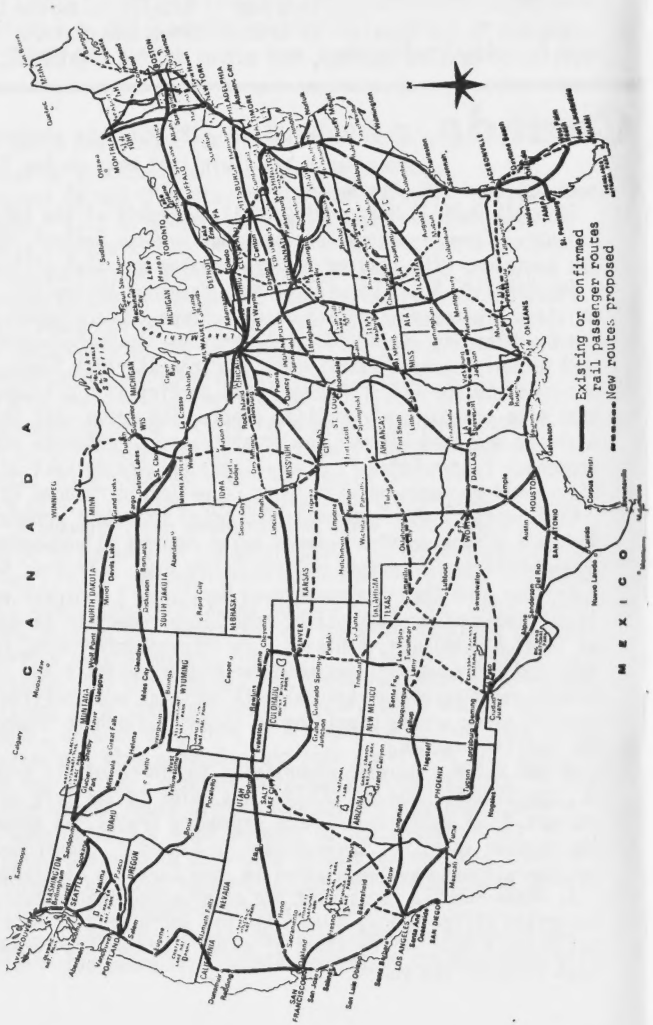

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The 4449 had two years with the Freedom Train; a famous run up the Southern last August, and the Amtrak 3-day trip from Miami, plus a round trip to Chattanooga. But these were only preliminaries. This was the big one--the final triumph, the Last Blast. "It'll never be repeated," said Amtrak. So we came to ride behind steam and to pretend once again that all the world was young.

Precisely at 8am on Apr 13, Extra 4449, flying white flags, backed out of Birmingham Terminal Station, pushing the following consist: UP auxiliary tender (upon which someone had lettered "4449b" in the dust); Freedom Train tool and crew car "Columbia"; parlor car 3644 "Nathan Hale"; open-door baggage 1117; dome coach 9545 "Silver Vision"; coach 6008; counter-lounge 8399; dome coach "Silver Stream"; coaches 3965, 3925, and 6024; ex-Wabash dome observation lounge 9310, with piano manned by Ted Lemen of Chicago, commissioned by Amtrak to play and sing the full trip. The excursion cars had arrived the evening before from New Orleans (via Mobile) at the old L&N station. Amtrak had sent an E unit from Chicago to get around the railroad's 40mph speed restriction, but the L&N had insisted on it anyway.

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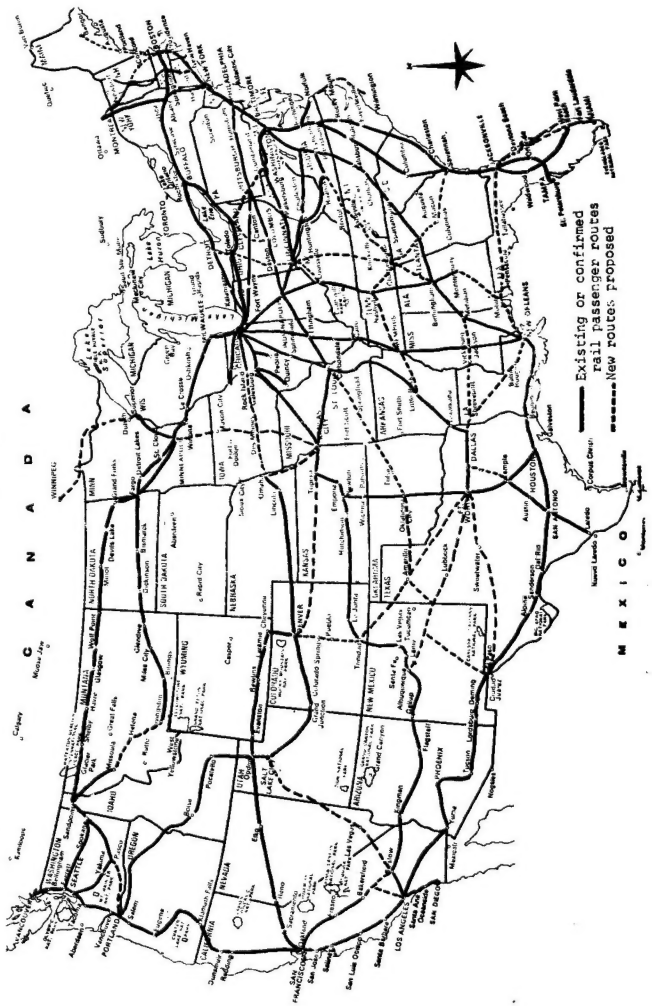

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We pass a high school with the entire student body out at trackside waving us past. And we are flying! Speeds up in the 70's at least. Mainline steam at its finest, the way it was meant to be enjoyed. All excitement now, as we go into the hole to meet the SOUTHERN CRESCENT. Horn honks, whistle blows, and cameras click. Then the lush green of the Alabama countryside continues to slip past the windows, the Black Warrior River is crossed, and much time is spent in the three dome cars.

Presently, we steam into Meridian, Mississippi. Due to stopping every so often for hot box detectors, we are running a little late. At this point, we join the ICG's freight-only line to Jackson, where once the SOUTHWESTERN LIMITED ran, altho at night. Track is not too bad by ICG standards.

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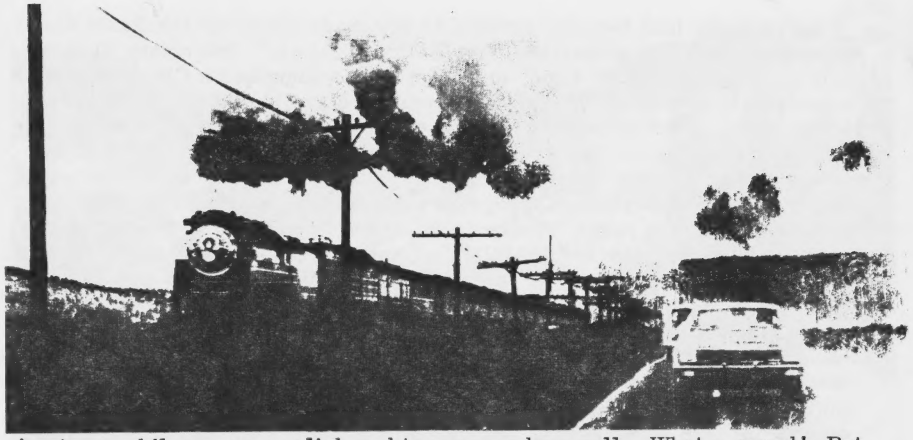
Soon, it's back up to speed again. In fact, after stopping at Hazlehurst we speed along some stretches at over 80. Various timings are made, with the median speed conservatively set at 87mph! Hot ziggity--what a show! Staccato exhaust sounds blur to almost a steady roar as soot comes



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I didn't rejoin the excursion until Apr 22 at El Paso. Meantime, I'd heard that repairs were made to the engine, and she wheeled out of New Orleans and across the Huey P. Long Memorial Bridge in high style (tho a freight train blocked the view and the picture-taking). By Lake Charles, Louisiana, it was reported, the throttle casing had broken, and another diesel was needed. Due into Houston by 9pm, it didn't arrive until 1am, leaving the next morning at 8:00. An SP diesel was then cut into the consist behind the UP tender, and ran until El Paso, where an Amtrak unit took over. At Alpine, Texas a real ranch barbecue party was thrown for the train's passengers and crew, and reports are that it was a blast. Then, at Sierra Blanca, a genuine photo runpast was attempted by Amtrak; but during the backup move the SP diesel fouled some signalling, causing some problems. So SP said there would be no more backups allowed.

At El Paso I noted some additions to the consist: Amtrak SDP40F 543 (which came in on the SUNSET); car 6008 had been replaced by 5685, 6023, and 6021. The rest remained, altho two more coaches--6013 and 6018--were ahead of the observation. Precisely at 8am, our scheduled departure time, the SP put a westbound freight out in front of us. Most heads felt the move was deliberate. Altho we left right afterwards, yellow blocks prevented any speed.

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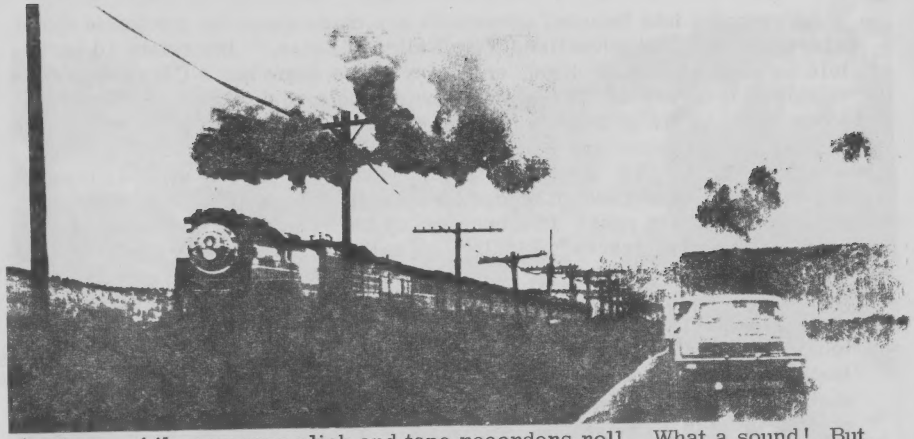

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As we come into Benson, comments are made about the trackside motel with a big sign that advertises: "No Railroad Noise." Interstate 10 parallels us a good bit of the time, and a guy in the dome has a CB radio. He's talking to truckers on the highway, joking and explaining about the steam locomotive. Lots of laughs from the rest of us. This loud entertainment drowns out scanners, but helps make the miles pass. At Vail, Arizona, where the ex-EP&SW tracks (westbound main) cross over the old SP main (eastbound track) on a high bridge, a photographer at trackside shouts up at us as we slowly pass: "I've been set up here for three hours and you've come on the other track." Finally, we pull into Tucson about an hour late.

We leave town promptly at 8am on Apr 23. It's getting hot already. The uniform of the day is: railroad cap, 4449 T-shirt, nondescript pants and shoes, and camera with wide cloth strap. I have a parlor accommodation today, and Ray serves me coffee and doughnuts to start things off. Near Red Rock, Arizona we pass the eastbound-hurrying SUNSET LIMITED. The consist is swollen by 8 sleepers, which carried a large contingent of people coming in from L.A. and waiting for us at Phoenix.

When we turn off the mainline at Picacho, a photo run is called for. A line is formed a few yards from the engine, but that proves futile as the engine moves up a full trainlength. Everybody gets on at the rear observation car. Now an easy 45mph is the prevailing speed, while a couple of light planes and a helicopter from KOOL-TV play tag with us. Liquid refreshment and subdued parlor car conversation are soothing as I take pictures thru the windows. Some girls on horseback greet us coming into Mesa, where three people get into the parlor for the short ride to Phoenix.

We stay in the capital close to an hour, with the engine being serviced. Here, "The Frimbo" joins us again, with big hellos from his friends. "Hoot Hoot" goes that steamboat whistle, and we chuff off again towards the West. At this point, three attractive ladies go thru the train, making reservations for Yuma hotels--the Ramada, Chilton and Holiday Inns. Even room keys are handed out. At Yuma, buses provided transport to our room, then back the next day.

About halfway to Yuma, we stop at Hyder for another photo run. This time, there was a small rock formation a trainlength ahead of the engine, and we all scrambled there. The resulting runpast was quite good. Altho the train still did not back up, there would have been no problem, as this is semaphore territory. (Some said that even in block signal territory there was no real problem; it was simply a case of local officials protecting their railroad jobs by doing what they thought upper management would want --i.e., making a pain of themselves to Amtrak.)

Sunday, Apr 24, we storm out of Yuma, again on time at 9am, climb up from the Colorado River Valley, and head towards Los Angeles. Still 45mph and light workings with the engine. The photo run at Salton is cancelled due to "time limitations," and many people were disappointed. Word spread around that the SP had ordered NO MORE PHOTO STOPS. At Lordsburg, Art Lloyd burned up the telephone wires calling Washington and San Francisco, with the result that we had photo stops.

Grinding up Beaumont Hill west of Indio, California, we saw highway bridges covered with railfans taking pictures--but little if any smoke or stack noise marked the passing of the 4449. The Interstate highway was moving along at 45mph, with traffic backed up a good mile behind the "train pacers." We streaked down the other side of the grade, to the Colton stop. Crossing the UP-ATSF tracks, at Colton Tower, I recall the shot Stan Kistler tried to take of the 4449 in regular service at this point. A freight had gotten in the way at the wrong moment as our 4-8-4 friend chuffed past with the CHEROKEE.

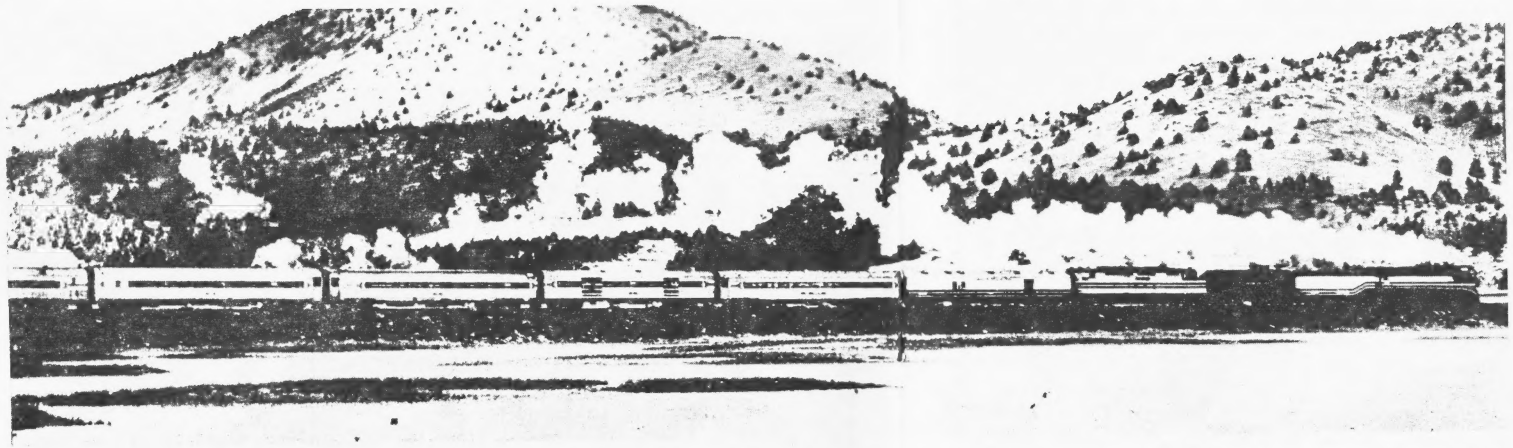
Near Mt. Shasta: Pete's "cover shot" that didn't work out.

At West Colton Yard we creep by a derailment on the adjacent track. We fly thru Ontario and Pomona with whistle shrieking. Past my old college at Cal Poly. The sound is great. Down the "old" route via Alhambra to a final proud entry into Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. It's the first time since 1956 for this girl. We say goodbye to the 3-dome consist at this point.

Two days later, the line inside the L.A. station's waiting room stretches almost outside the doors. Upstairs, the police aren't letting anyone near the engine (presumably because the train length puts the engine out onto the interlocking), but a few photographers manage to sneak up there. I note the changed consist: GS-4 4449; UP tender; Amtrak SDP40F 527 (in Reistrup stripes); "Columbia"; "Nathan Hale"; baggage 1117; coaches 5231 and 5685; lunch counter 8399; coaches 6023, 6021, 3925, 3965 (the latter two still containing their railroadiana shops); 9373--the "good" ex-SP dome lounge, which unlike some of its kin has see-thru windows (This was the car damaged in the Mar 8 STARLIGHT derailment; all praise to the company for getting it ready on time for the trip); on the rear, ex-SCL lounge-observation 3342, sporting the drumhead "PANAMA LIMITED." I congratulate Amtrak on this car. It was neat, clean, Lexan properly placed. It has been re-refurbished and was much improved from its condition when I rode it on the PANAMA just a year ago, when it was dismal. Now, it radiates! Counting the "Columbia," that's 19 cars--an exception to consist lengths Amtrak made today.

Even before we left L.A., right behind the STARLIGHT, all the vestibules were taken. More crowds got on at Glendale. We sailed along, but at Chatsworth got a red board, and there was talk of an obstruction in one of the Santa Susana Pass tunnels. The word came out that a camper truck had been driven into the tunnel (a shortcut for the freeway?) and had gotten wedged sideways. No. 14 was waiting ahead of us. After sitting about a half-hour, we finally got going.

Most of the grade crossings, curves and hills along the tracks were lined with people. And they were not disappointed, either. During the layover in L.A., the 4449 crew were hard at work and got the engine into almost tip-top shape. As a result, the diesel was set to "idle" most of the time, and much stack talk took place, with the resultant billows of smoke--mostly white--to the delight of all. She was steaming well.



Near the Oregon border, the steam train chuffs along--a motorcading shot by Pete Bretz.

Photo caption for page 9: motorcading alone in northern California, Pete took this "grab shot" out the rear window of his car as twilight was falling. Daily steam train ridership figures were: Apr 13, 757; 14, 317; 16, 698; 17, 930; 19, 276; 20, 634; 22, 275; 23, 570; 24, 729; 26, 1022; 27, 903; 29, 799; 30, 899; May 1, 870.

The train today is much more crowded than before, with people coming and going all the time, all vestibules taken... "Excuse me, can I squeeze in here for a sec?..." I munch an Amtrak ham and cheese sandwich in the ex-UP lunch counter and am still in animated conversation with someone as we arrive in Oxnard. I waved at the station agent whom I know, but he didn't see me.

A lot of people get off at Santa Barbara, but more pile on. This is really an experience. I don't think I'll ever get tired of that whistle! Wind, steam, surf--what an unforgettable combination, as the Super Power from Lima speeds us along those famous 113 miles of SP luxury viewing.

It's now 4:16pm, and the train is at Honda. The southbound STARLIGHT has flashed by about 10 minutes ago. We're standing on a sandy rise and a cliff above the white breakers. The tracks are alive as everybody swarms out for the photo stop. Old hands, knowing about no backup moves, walk way up ahead, while new passengers mill around next to the engine. People are as thick and colorful as wildflowers, stilling any thoughts of "pure" train pictures. The wind is a little cold just now, and...ah, there's the whistle and she's starting up. Distant shouts of "Hey, get out of the way!" are heard. White smoke is being blown by the ocean wind out across the sandy fields. Beautiful. In a minute we're back on board. A railfan is waving something he found. It's an old spike maul, about 50 years old--quite a find. He says he'll get it plated.

Later on, our train scurries us along the edge of the Santa Maria Valley and Guadalupe, leaving there at 5:28pm, over 1 1/2 hours late. The last train to stop here regularly was 90-91, the old COASTER, which came off in the early 60's. Thru Oceano, the whole town was out to watch us pass. Much whistling and high action. A glimpse of the ocean again at Pismo Beach, and then we ease into San Luis Obispo near 6:30. It's here that the rear tail sign "PAMANA LIMITED" was stolen off the observation car reportedly by a person driving an SP crew van. I have no word on whether he was caught, but for the rest of the trip it's just a big, blank hole there at the end of the train.

We awake very early on Apr 27 in order to grab a vestibule for the Cuesta Grade spectacular. Let's open that train door...mmph, won't budge! Next car down has a yielding door, so we are able to make a "stand" on the right, about 3/4 of the way back from the engine. Some train crew members are trying to prevent others from boarding too soon, but they overlook me, huddled in a corner with tripod and equipment.

With a lurch, the train takes off exactly at 8am. Very quickly, we stop for a photo runpast at the famed horseshoe curve just above San Luis Obispo. Hordes of fans get set up on a grassy hill that overlooks the full sweep of that curve--the sun in the proper direction--but I elect to stay on the train in order to secure the vestibule for the hill climb later.

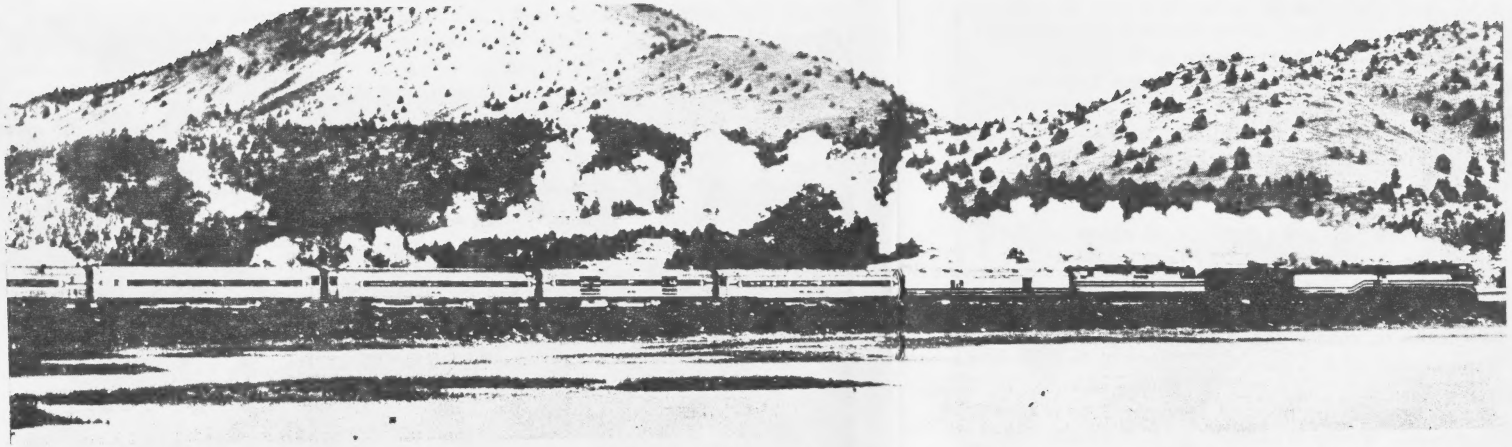
At 8:30 the run begins. The 4449 whistles off, then slips her drivers, tossing much smoke and steam into the air. Fantastical! She heads around the curve as zillions of feet of film are used up. I get a good view of the engine from the Dutch door. Most heads agree that it is the best run of the trip.

As we move up the grade and thru many short tunnels, and twise and turn about, the sunlight plays tricks with the smoke plume; shining thru it and creating stunning effects for the camera. We're up high now, overlooking U.S. 101--lined with cars, of course. I close the top door for a 1300-foot tunnel. Is this the big one? No, a couple of more picture opportunities, then into the summit bore of around 3700 feet. Up front in the baggage car, railfans watch the lightbulbs inside the tunnel darken quickly from view. That should be a tip-off. The 4449 is really working inside these small confines, and it's actually steam-cleaning the inside roof, causing all the soot and oil of many years to stream into the air around the cars. As we emerge into the light, the open baggage car is filled with smoke for a time. When it clears, it seems that many railfans have received a makeup job, courtesy of the locomotive. Wet, soot-streaked faces and clothing abound. Goggles are grimy black, but protect the eyes under them--the only clean places on many people. Up ahead, the 4449 is black where moments before she was red, white and blue. The "Columbia" and the "Nathan Hale" are both grimy too. Some fans went to wash, but others proudly walked thru the train, showing off their "souvenirs."

After a while, we stopped at Bradley for a photo run, which gave us an opportunity to make photos of the soot-stained motive power. On the runpast, Doyle McCormick used the air horn a lot, as a change of pace.

Later, our gritty passenger train stops at King City (unscheduled) at 11:30am, but we now wait on the main just north of town for the late arrival of No. 11. She glides by after we rot for 35 minutes. A 7-Up and a bag of peanuts later, we arrive at Salinas, where large crowds are on hand. Many have been waiting since the STARLIGHT dropped them off.

At San Jose I ride the parlor car again for the last leg into Oakland, where we arrive at 5pm. Right after unloading, the equipment is backed



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As we move up the grade and thru many short tunnels, and twise and turn about, the sunlight plays tricks with the smoke plume; shining thru it and creating stunning effects for the camera. We're up high now, overlooking U.S. 101--lined with cars, of course. I close the top door for a 1300-foot tunnel. Is this the big one? No, a couple of more picture opportunities, then into the summit bore of around 3700 feet. Up front in the baggage car, railfans watch the lightbulbs inside the tunnel darken quickly from view. That should be a tip-off. The 4449 is really working inside these small confines, and it's actually steam-cleaning the inside roof, causing all the soot and oil of many years to stream into the air around the cars. As we emerge into the light, the open baggage car is filled with smoke for a time. When it clears, it seems that many railfans have received a makeup job, courtesy of the locomotive. Wet, soot-streaked faces and clothing abound. Goggles are grimy black, but protect the eyes under them--the only clean places on many people. Up ahead, the 4449 is black where moments before she was red, white and blue. The "Columbia" and the "Nathan Hale" are both grimy too. Some fans went to wash, but others proudly walked thru the train, showing off their "souvenirs."

After a while, we stopped at Bradley for a photo run, which gave us an opportunity to make photos of the soot-stained motive power. On the runpast, Doyle McCormick used the air horn a lot, as a change of pace.

Later, our gritty passenger train stops at King City (unscheduled) at 11:30am, but we now wait on the main just north of town for the late arrival of No. 11. She glides by after we rot for 35 minutes. A 7-Up and a bag of peanuts later, we arrive at Salinas, where large crowds are on hand. Many have been waiting since the STARLIGHT dropped them off.

At San Jose I ride the parlor car again for the last leg into Oakland, where we arrive at 5pm. Right after unloading, the equipment is backed

away to make room for the SAN JOAQUIN's approach. It's now an extra day to lay over in San Francisco. On this day, after staying at his favorite Clift Hotel, Rogers Whitaker took a round trip down to Merced.

Friday, Apr 29. I secure a rented car, a yellow Opel, and begin to motorcade the trip. From this vantage point, things take on a very different character. The engine and train become "the thing", in place of vestibuling aboard it and having "family" talk among railfans. Alone in the car, I have to juggle inadequate maps, trying to find appropriate side roads off the freeways to get to trackside.

Due to the area's water shortage, it had been difficult to clean up the equipment from that tunnel incident, but still the 4449 looks nice and shiny charging past. It's wall-to-wall railfans at the best locations, but on one occasion I'm perched high above the tracks on a cliff overlooking the Carquinez Straits Bridge. Lots of smoke trails back over the locomotive as the train passes below. I love the sound of the ex-SP&S 5-chime whistle reverberating off the hills.

After stopping at Martinez and Davis, the Special turned off to traverse the western edge of the Sacramento. From Woodland to Red Bluff, Interstate 5 closely parallels the right-of-way for 94 miles. Of course, traffic in the northbound lanes is slowed to the pace of the train. In addition, the "old" road was closer to the tracks and had its own line of cars moving along. Pretty soon I leave the freeway and join the crowd next to the engine. Motorcading is best done with two people--one driving and the other taking the pictures. I have to do both jobs today. As the locomotive moves up the tangent track at 40-60mph, a line of 30 cars follows it. But the first 12 or so automobiles, including myself, wish to pace right alongside the engine--to watch those flashing drivers. Let's say my Opel is up next to the engine and I'm taking fantastic shots while still trying to travel at 50mph. A Volkswagen passes and gets in front, then slows slightly so he'll be next to the 4449. A Honda moves in ahead of the VW and slows, then a Dodge does the same. By this time, I'm forced back to the diesel. More cars pass and pull in, and by the time I'm back to the dome car, I decide it's time for me to do some passing. I gun the motor and race past all those other cars who are obscuring my view, get in ahead of the racing engine, then pace myself to be alongside her once more. Presently, another car gets in front and the whole process begins again.

This game of horizontal leap-frog with autos can be very dangerous, especially with opposing traffic, but this frontage road has very little of that. It's very exhilirating to keep that engine in view, to see the trail of smoke pouring back over the streamlined string of cars. The drivers whirl around, and three different "whistle" sounds emanate from the silver-faced beast. Ah, that old, forgotten sight of yesterday, come to life again!

Hot box detector!--and the train grinds to a stop. Sometimes the dispatcher had given permission to highball on thru, but this time our parade came to a halt. Not only was the frontage road jammed with stopped cars, but the parallel freeway was too. Soon, the Highway Patrol came by and ordered all the cars stopped on the Interstate to "move on, before the tow-truck gets here." They had a hard time of it, as folks were very reluctant to go. Finally, two blasts on the steamboat, and we are off again.

Now it's much whistle-blowing, smoke billowing and cars passing one another as the two-lane road becomes "one-way" most of the time--all cars darting to one side occasionally to let a truck go by. At times, opposing traffic was forced off the road by "railfans" who wouldn't give ground. Soon, the 94 thrilling miles were past us, and we had to go back to picking locations and waiting for the train, for the rest of the way to Dunsmuir.

(Left:) Approaching a grade crossing in extreme northern California--Bretz photo.
(Below:) Time out for repairs at Los Angeles--Paul Rayton photo.

As we got into the mountains, the Interstate (with no frontage road this time) hugged the side of the hills, while the tracks twisted in and out of tunnels and generally followed the river channel. This allows fine views at every turn. Coming around a typical corner as I'm dashing ahead of the train, I would find cars draped along the side of the road and photographers running to set up. Passing them, I might set up at the corner beyond. Others would join me or pass me. After the train charged up the hill (much smoke and sound--with me waving to passengers I knew), it would be back into the yellow Opel again and off to new conquests.

The light is very tricky now and the sun is behind the mountains. I'm worrying about some of the exposures. Particularly disappointing was an over-exposed "cover" shot with Mt. Shasta in the background, that I imagined I'd send to Trains magazine.

Three miles out of Dunsmuir the Special was stabbed. The yard was choked with trains, and the dispatcher was juggling freights and forgetting about the 4449. Art Lloyd, I learned later, got on the train radio and inquired as to the delay. The reply was "Freights are where the money is..." You'll just have to wait. Finally the train highballed into Dunsmuir, and because of the grade put on quite a show coming into town.

Here, as at Yuma, school buses had been chartered to take people to various hotels. Due to limited space in Dunsmuir, many of us stayed in the town of Mt. Shasta.

Saturday morning, Apr 30, the Dunsmuir Rotary Club put on a pancake breakfast for all the passengers. Local cheerleaders served as waitresses. But then the rain started to cascade down. The consist didn't pull into the station until about 20 minutes before train time, so there were plenty of people standing in doorways, under awnings, and sitting in cars.

I dropped off my companions from the train, with whom I'd had dinner last night, and hurried north to set up at Contrera Loop. It's hard to reach, but I found my spot at the end of a muddy road. Others had found

this spot too. Rain pelted down, fogging up the windows and making it hard to listen for the train. I opened a window, but the rain came in and dampened my camera. Drip, drip, drip. Then... chuff, chuff, chuff... way in the distance, out of sight. I brave the raindrops and stand outside under a tree. Here she comes!

High action as the engine storms around the curve and slips her drivers a bit. The diesel seems to be working only minimally. I stay there and watch the smoke move along the far side of the mountain. What a sight!

The rain lets up a little as we now find ourselves higher up the grade near Black Butte, which is wrapped in fog. Mt. Shasta itself is lost in the overcast. More charge-pasts, better than the photo runs. The Siskiyou Line veers off below Weed, while the main line to Klamath Falls hugs the northern base of Mt. Shasta. The scenery opens up here to afford wide, spectacular views. I take a side road--very bumpy--and get a vista of about five miles of track. A freight train comes back with dynamic braking, but he stops on a siding. All is quiet except for birds and the wind. A few raindrops come and go. Thick smoke heralds the steam locomotive around a curve, and... oh, happy day!...it's on this side of the freight train.

I decide to end my motorcading when my present stock of film is gone. I have enough left to participate in another game of horizontal lead-frog in the 10 miles of parallel road below Dorris. Here the sun is flashing off the nose of the big Lima as she wheels those 19 cars along near 60mph. All this is doubly thrilling for those of us in the steam-starved West. After a good sequence just over the Oregon border, we have to stop for gas. I resolve to finish my film at the Klamath Falls station. But, driving slowly towards town, I see the train, stopped. I pass the parked motorcaders. A couple of miles ahead, I can get an extra-bonus sequence. I get some nice shots of her charging along with a pool of water and bullrushes in the foreground. As I sqeeze off the last frame, some Mallards are surprised into flight, and enter into the photo composition. The 4449 flashes by and streaks on down the line, her "sparks" flying and whistle wailing. "...Go it, old girl, you've done her well..."

The arrival at Klamath Falls is anticlimactic for me, as this is where I part. An Amtrak official on the platform asks me if I could give Rogers Whitaker a lift to his hotel. An honor, to be sure. Outside the hotel, I look down the street and catch my last glimpse of the engine as she crosses on a viaduct, then whistles out of town. Over lunch, I ask Rogers what his immediate plans are. He says he's taking the STARLIGHT this evening down to Oakland, the hop aboard No. 6 to Chicago, go to Milwaukee for a day, and ride the LAKE SHORE LIMITED to New York in time to join the George Pins trip on the D&H behind the Apollo freight. As I write these lines, "The Frimbo" is there, sitting back and soaking up his umteenth rail mile. Will any of the track be new, I ask? "No, just some interchanges and such..." I say goodbye to him, to Oregon, and to the wonder of the trip itself.

Later I get a card from a thru-to-Portland passenger who said that all was well into Portland. In fact, SP business car 106 "Oregon" was attached (up front) into the consist and the diesel removed, making a 20-car pure steam run the last lap home. Celebrations, and so forth. Now, 4449, till we see you again, au revoir.

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NEW SPECS ON AMTRAK'S BI-LEVEL CARS

Amtrak's forthcoming bi-level cars, or Superliners (the name chosen by its ad agency) will number 284--102 coaches, 48 coach-baggage cars, 70 sleepers, 25 "Sight-seer" lounges, and 39 diners. The cars will be numbered in the 30,000-series. The first coach was to have been sent from the Pullman-Standard factory in Indiana May 19 to the DOT's Pueblo, Colorado test center for ride quality tests.

In general, the cars are described this way: they measure 85 ft long, 16' 2" high, and 10' 2" wide. Windows have the usual glass outer pane with Lexan inner pane. All windows, except in lounges, have curtains and no shades. End doors are sliding type similar to Amfleet cars, while entrance doors are one-piece, non-Dutch doors of the manual swing type, with a large window that opens for conductor to peer out. (Regular Dutch doors would be an easy retrofit, according to a P-S man.)

Amtrak will furnish its own seats for the cars--similar to Amfleet seats, with legrests and folddown trays. Toilets are vacuum type with waste going into a macerator which liquifies it and discharges it as ecologically safe matter when train speed is over 25mph. Cars have a 500-gal. water tank plus an 80-gal. hot water tank.

The full coach (low density, for long distance) has 77 seats--62 on upper level and 15 below, including one for a handicapped person. Also on the lower level are a small baggage area, handicapped toilet, 4 unisex toilets, and small women's lounge with one toilet. Aisle width is 22" upper, 24" lower. Windows are 24 by 66 inches. Floor-to-ceiling height on each level is 6' 7". Passengers enter on the lower level and pass between cars on the upper level. Handicapped passengers board on a special ramp carried on-board. There is a P.A. system for recorded music and announcements.

The coach-baggage has 62 seats on the upper level (one specification called for 78 high-density seats) and baggage storage below. The storage area is reached from outside thru a sliding plug door about 5' wide. The lower level also has 4 unisex toilets and woman's lounge with one toilet. The toilet rooms are equipped with toilet, sink, mirrors, electrical outlet, sanitary napkin dispenser, infant changing table, coat hooks, and attendant call button, and has sufficient space to change clothes in. The woman's lounge, running full width of lower level, has vanity table, stools, couch, sinks, mirrors, electrical outlet and a private, enclosed toilet. Coaches have water fountains by stairwell on both levels. Two color schemes are used in the coaches ("earthy colors," according to an Amtrak source, altho planned by the same person--no longer with Amtrak--who designed the somehwat garish color scheme in present conventional coaches).

The sleeping car holds 45 people. Upper level has 5 first class bedrooms, and 4 of them can be made into two suites by pushing back a solid wall. All beds are transverse, as in the Pullman designation of a "bedroom." First class rooms have a wash basin in the room, plus an enclosed toilet. Cars are fitted with a waterpik shower system for use in the toilet compartment, but the showers will not be operable when the cars are first introduced. The couch folds down to form the lower berth, and the upper folds down from the ceiling and wall. Beds are 28 to 30" wide. An additional collapsible chair is in the room. The room door has a window with a drape, and outside windows have drapes also--no shades. There is no shoe box in the room. There are conflicting reports on whether there are individual temperature controls. All sleeping car rooms have a 3-channel audio system for radio, recorded music and P.A., a porter call button, and reading lights.

In the center of the upper level, opposite the stairs, is a porter's seat with call board visible from it--there is no specific porter room. The remaining half of the upper level holds 10 economy sleeping rooms, each with 2 beds. These lack private toilet or wash facilities. They also have a windowed door with drapes.

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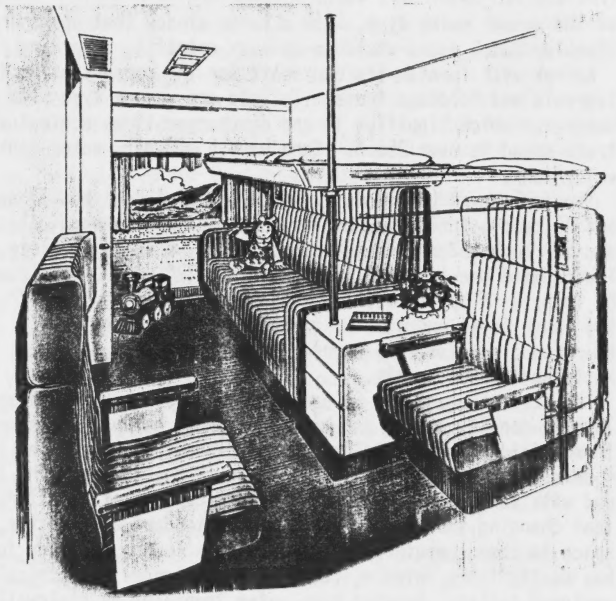
On the lower level are 4 more economy rooms, plus 5 unisex toilets, one economy family room, and one handicapped room. The economy family room runs the width of the car at one end of the car, and has two full-size beds and two child-size ones (see accompanying illustration). Entrance to the room is in the middle of one wall, and there is no private toilet or wash facilities. The room for a handicapped person and companion also runs the width of the car. It has a lower bed of extra width, and an upper berth that folds down from the wall. A toilet and wash basin are in the room, behind a curtain, and the wash room has an outside window with drape. The room has ample space for maneuvering a wheelchair, and has an electrical outlet capable of powering a portable respirator. (Wheelchair passengers will be confined to the lower level, with the porter bringing their food.)

The dining car seats 72--40 in one half and 32 in the other. The center section contains elevators, storage, refrigeration, linen and other work areas. All seats in the room are fixed, and windows have drapes. There is a P.A./music system. The kitchen is on the lower level, and meals are moved up by dumbwaiter. The all-electric kitchen has one microwave oven and 4 convection ovens, and one 24"x30" grill. There are also a toaster, coffee maker, warming table, sinks, and refrigerator storage capacity for 63 frozen food modules.



Food and equipment enter the car thru loading doors on the lower level. Most food will be bulk-portioned, but not precooked, and cooking and passenger portioning will take place on board. Kitchen equipment is supplied by the Frigitemp Corp. There is a double-door restroom for crew only on the lower level.

The "Sight-Seer" lounge car has lounge and bar area above, and a coffee shop below. The upper level lounge is divided into 3 partitioned sections: the 2 sections on the ends have 8 double and 6 single swivel seats which can face a ceiling-height closed circuit TV screen. The middle section has a bar for drinks and snacks, and includes 25 fixed-position, serpentine-style "love seats." The lower level cafe can serve full meals in additon to snacks and drinks. It has two high temperature convection ovens, one microwave oven, storage freezers, sink, and coffee maker. It has 4, 4-person tables and cushioned bench-type lounge seats with cocktail tables. There is an electric piano in one end of the lounge. Two unisex toilets appear on the lower level.

The first lounge car will reportedly not appear until April or May 1978, but P-S believes it can complete 100 cars by the end of 1977. By mid-July, 4 coaches, 2 sleepers and 2 diners will be out for extensive shakedown and personnel training. P-S's plant in the south end of Chicago will be vacant by the end of September, when the NY subway car order is finished, and there would be room there to produce single-level cars, if Amtrak ordered them.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

WHEN TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY Adams announced on May 3 his decision to terminate the MOUNTAINEER, he pointed to an FRA analysis that showed that the number of passengers aboard on any given segment of the route at any one time averaged only 35. "Patronage would have to triple to improve the economics of the route substantially. No such growth is foreseen", he said. When the replacement HILLTOPPER begins operation, it will stop at the Petersburg station at 3156 South St., the station used by the PALMETTO and Florida trains, and Amtrak will discontinue use of the River St. station. South of the Petersburg station, the HILLTOPPER will enter Collier Yard, where the train will be turned and headed west. Amtrak said it is exploring options to build a track connection in the area to eliminate a backup move and reduce running time..... GG-1 NUMBER 4935 had its rededication in May 15 ceremonies at Washington DC. The introduction of the GG-1 electric locomotive coincided with the start of electrified rail service between New York and Washington in 1935. It seems appropriate that the engine should symbolically be rededicated now, as the nation turns once again to electric power and a revitalized Northeast Corridor for our future transportation needs. We'll have a full report on the ceremony next issue.....

* * *

THE SDP40F ENGINES that will be rebuilt into 4-axle-truck jobs are nos. 540, 544, 551, 552, 553, 554, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 569, 571, 574, 575, 576, 578, 580, 581, 584, 585, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 600, 612, and 613; not #540-579 as reported earlier. Six engines per month are being rebuilt at the LaGrange shop, and should start coming out in late June or early July. So far, engines 540, 552, 553, 557, 558, 581, 578, 569, 554, 556, and 559 have been known to have gone for rebuilding. The engine type designation they will receive has been a matter of much speculation; one unconfirmed report is that they will be called F40-PHR types, standing for Passenger, Head-end power, Rebuilt..... AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION has begun a new summer promotion that appears headed for success. In big ads (seen on the last page of NY Times travel section May 22) the corporation announces its "Summer Fun-Run" to the Magic Kingdom of Walt Disney World. Auto-Train, it notes, is the official family railroad of Walt Disney World. With special appeal to families, the ads picture in photos and cartoons happy children aboard the train mingling with Walt Disney characters. Also appealing is the announcement of new rates starting Jun 15, in which kids under 12 go for half fare ($22). The one-way fare for one's auto is $159 (fares subject to ICC approval). "America's Great Train" is what A-T calls its vehicle, and notes at the bottom of the ad, "The 'auto-train' is not a part of Amtrak"..... E. M. FRIMBO was quoted twice in the NY Times of May 15: in the magazine section, in an article on "The Moped Revolution" (a moped is a sort of small, quiet motorbike), Frimbo is said to have ridden one last December when New York legalized them, calling them useful alternatives to the automobile. In the Book Review section, in a review of "Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow", a book by Dee Brown, Frimbo is said to warn the reviewer to "take issue" with the author for criticizing Amtrak for running trains over such worn-out track. Says reviewer Tony Hiss: "Cheer up, Dee Brown! Trains still live"..... SPEAKING OF BOOKS, "The Palace Guard" by Dan Rather and Gary Paul Gates, about the Nixon administration, in chapter 16 has some interesting remarks about former DOT Secretary John Volpe, who is said to have talked Nixon into approving the original Amtrak bill, over the objections of Ehrlichman. The authors say that Volpe hurt himself by promoting the Amtrak idea too much, because it put him in opposition to the powerful oil-automotive-highway-construction complex..... THE READER'S DIGEST is on the subject of railroads and government subsidies once more, with an article in the May issue that seems to claim that union featherbedding is the only problem

holding back railroad profits. It warns against "aid from Washington" and notes that "Amtrak, now running at a near half-billion-dollar loss annually, does not inspire confidence about government help" with a very pointed footnote referring the reader to April's anti-Amtrak tirade.....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN'S Lou Menk gave a speech in Seattle May 16, telling his audience: "The American public was not well-served by the insistence of government over decades that railroads continue to operate passenger service for a public that had long since voted for the rubber tire and the airplane." But his audience turns off entirely when he brings up the "stagecoach" line, and in post-speech questioning he mentioned instead the need for better communication between his railroad and Amtrak in several areas of joint concern..... SOME AMTRAK OFFICIALS, very pleased at the large patronage increases on the SAN DIEGANS, are reportedly saying that one more round trip per day would "crack the market wide open" on the route. Figures just out for March show ridership 99% higher than in Mar 1976. Systemwide, short distance ridership was up 7%, while long distance was up 5%. The most heavily patronized long distance train was the COAST STARLIGHT, as usual, with 35,650 passengers--a 36% rise from Mar 1976.....

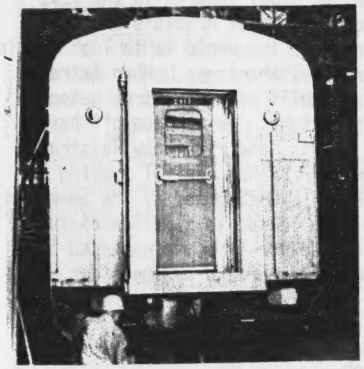
* * *

WHILE THE MEDIA often seem to be bombarded by anti-rail propaganda (the anti-rail people, now finding themselves with less political influence, turn to the media to try to sway the public), more positive notes are heard from those directly involved in serving passengers by rail: Amtrak's Paul Reistrup, speaking to Portland, Oregon's Rotary Club just after the Freedom Train locomotive was delivered there, said: "There is no substitute for quality service, and the American traveling public appreciates this. People like to ride trains (Ed. note: that would make a good bumper strip slogan). In fact, the American public seems to be more ready to ride trains than we have thought they were".....

THE ORIENT EXPRESS ended 94 years of operation when it pulled into Istanbul on May 22, 5 hrs, 38 mins late, with two dozen passengers aboard for the last run. A large crowd was gathered to witness theevent. Last year, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey decided not to pay their portions of the long route's costs, spelling doom forthe famous train. The last train consisted of one sleeper and several second-class cars, with no food car at all..... DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: in the First March issue we reported that dome lounge 9373 was damaged in the Mar 8 COAST STARLIGHT derailment (and repeated by Pete Bretz in this issue). We now learn that dome 9370 was the victim. Early this month a "hospital train" of cars from that derailment arrived at the Amtrak Topeka Shop: cars 1110, 4542, 4860, 8033, 2816, & 9370. The dome was damaged heavily on one end, but otherwise not bad. The other cars had light to moderate damage. Engines 559 and 569 powered the train, and along with deadheading 554 & 556, went on to LaGrange for rebuilding into 4-axle types. In our last issue in a picture caption on page 12 we incorrectly identified George Falcon of Citizens for Rail California as Amtrak's Neal Owen..... SINCE THE ARROWHEAD was extended to Duluth and the schedule flipped, business has tripled, according to local sources..... THOSE NOMINATIONS FOR Amtrak Board members are currently at the White House awaiting President Carter's attention. Amtrak's Board will meet on May 26, and will decide whether to go ahead with the conversion of 25 more conventional sleepers into all-electric cars. Reportedly the costs of doing this have proven to be much less than initial estimates, making the idea much more attractive to Amtrak. One source reports that the first such car will go onto the NIGHT OWL. This work was done at the Beech Grove shops, and early this month the first car emerged--sleeper #2717 "Pine Fern" now re-numbered as 2917 (see photo on next page, courtesy of Chuck Koch). Also in the works is 2923 (ex-2723 "Pine King"). Also at Beech Grove was the original dome car, 9401 "Silver Dome," for reasons unknown.....

A CONRAIL EXCURSION from Pittsburgh to Altoona May 15 was described by riders as a "disaster"--engine failures set the train way behind schedule.....

THE FOLLOWING CARS from the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR derailment of Dec 16, 1976 near Omaha have been repaired at Amtrak's Topeka Shop and are back in service: 1102, 1080, 1573, 5016, 4828, and 4823. Sleepers 2639 "Pacific Union" and 2722 "Pine Island" are still in the shop, with the latter being converted from steam air conditioning to Electro-Mechanical A/C. Dome coach 9464 is also there, but repairs have not begun, pending approval from Washington--an estimated $100,000..



A "RAILWAY AGE" report (May 9) says that Amtrak plans to order 15 lightweight electric locomotives for NorthEast Corridor use this summer, and will ask for bids on locomotives incorporating some of the features of the Swedish ASEA machine..... NO ONE ANNOUNCED the arrival and departure of train 59, the PANAMA LIMITED, at Jackson MS the morning of May 3, causing several sacks of mail, about 30 passengers, and a group of school children to miss the train. The station tracks there are elevated, and the gates are kept locked until train departure...

WHEN AMTRAK DECIDED to abandon the idea of the Ewing Avenue station site in St. Louis, it looked instead to the old REA Express building near Union Station. Plans for Amtrak's moving into it appear pretty nearly settled. The old building at 18th St. & Clark Ave. is 700 feet long and in need of extensive repairs, but the city has agreed to chip in $8000 for landscaping. Amtrak will use about 170 feet of the red-brick building, with the rest devoted to offices leased by the Union Station developers. There will be parking for over 200 cars, and an enclosed walkway to the trains is planned, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.....

THE LATEST OPPOSITION to revival of the DEL MONTE (from San Francisco to Monterey, in case you tuned in late) comes from the city of Salinas CA, which doesn't want to be taxed (it's in Monterey County) for the service which won't aid it. The Salinas Chamber of Commerce on May 17 voted to oppose Sen. Alquist's pending bill (see complete story last issue)..... THE WESTBOUND CONNECTION between the BROADWAY LIMITED train 41 (which reaches Chicago at 8:30am) and the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA (which lvs Chicago at 9:30am) will no longer be guaranteed by Amtrak, according to an inter-office memo dated May 17, to be effective immediately. Passengers will be ticketed thru only if they expressly request it, and with the understanding that Amtrak will not be liable in the event of a missed connection..... CHECKED BAGGAGE SERVICE and express service were withdrawn from the SAN JOAQUIN on May 15. On May 2 the ICC gave permission for this, and Amtrak said the baggage service was used only minimally. Amtrak said that in peak ridership periods it would add "extra on-board personnel" to assist passengers with their luggage. The SAN JOAQUIN Amfleet consist suffered a minor derailment in the yards at Oakland on May 12, with the result that conventional cars were substituted on the southbound run that day, and the train was delayed 59 minutes. The same consist ran back to Oakland on Friday the 13th--engine 615 and 5 conventional cars--seen running slowly thru Berkeley, on time but 5 minutes behind a slow freight..... THE OHIO ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers informs us that it had no intention whatsoever of making the May 16 trip of state officials on the NATIONAL LIMITED a protest move for the RILEY's present routing (see last issue, p. 17). On the contrary, explains OARP, the Amtrak Appreciation Day was to thank Amtrak for improving the NATIONAL's schedule and for calling attention to the fact that ConRail wants to abandon 23.8 miles of mainline track between Cambridge City and Charlottesville IN, on the route of the NATIONAL. OARP points out that this track is high-speed, grade-separated, block-signalled, double-track mainline, and the only basic reason it is planned for abandonment is the USRA's finding that it is weak in local freight carloadings. Good grief, it's an important thru line, argues OARP.....

BRINGING THE ENERGY crisis nearer: the big fire at the major Saudi Arabia oil facility this month was fortunately controlled before it turned into a major disaster, but it came close to creating an oil shortage rivalling or exceeding the 1973-4 embargo, according to the New York Times. In an editorial, "The Fire Next Time," the Times pointed out that even word of the fire sent "shock waves" thru Tokyo financial markets and threatened a loss of Saudi imports to the U.S. The Wall Street Journal reported that the fire set back Saudi Arabia's drive to hold down oil prices. All of this shows how vulnerable the world is to loss of its oil supply and how potentially near we are to more fuel shortages. When Amtrak's Paul Reistrup warns us that just a small percentage shift of riders from autos to trains and buses would overload those systems, he's right. Amtrak doesn't have enough equipment to prepare for coming ridership shifts, and right now Reistrup appears to be trying to stir up grassroots support for higher capital funding for Amtrak to order this needed equipment..... TWO PRIVATE CARS owned by the Smoky Hill Railway & Historical Society of Kansas City were leased to a motion picture company this month for filming of "Mary White," a made-for-TV movie expected to be shown on ABC in early December. Cars were the former Frisco business car 3 and a former Burlington commuter-baggage car 7301. The Frisco car became a Pullman named "Crystal Brook" in the movie, and the other became "Smoky Hill River." The cars went on a KCS-ATSF route from the K.C. RR Museum to Florence KS, which became Emporia for two days during filming of the RR scenes.....

* * *

THE NATIONAL LIMITED has been re-routed since May 2 thru Mattoon IL instead of Effingham (the Apr 24 timetables show Effingham), and the local paper there reports several cases of passenger detraining in Mattoon, believing that they had arrived in Effingham..... TEXAS HIGHWAY MAP photo of the Amtrak train (see last issue) shows a northbound INTER-AMERICAN, and was taken in Austin, where the MoPac line is located in the median of Loop One--better known as the MoPac Freeway, just south of the 35th Street freeway interchange. The map comes from the State Dept of Highways & Public Transportation. The map itself does not show rail lines..... CHICAGO-ST. LOUIS Amtrak trains in the near future will detour from ICG to Santa Fe Chicago-Joliet for about 6 months due to construction and modification of Kedzie Avenue underpass in Chicago..... THE 77th ANNIVERSARY of Casey Jones's famous ride and derailment near Vaughn MS were marked on Apr 30....

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR loses $500,000 a year, the railroad claims, but it has no discontinuance plans. A railroad spokesman last month told the press that Rio Grande doesn't want Amtrak to take it over because they would possibly add more trains which would interfere with freights..... A YOUNG SOLDIER from Ft. Lewis, WA last month pleaded not guilty when accused of phoning in a bomb threat to the COAST STARLIGHT at the L.A. toll-free center and demanding $5000 in gold.....

A MINNESOTA BILL to seek Amtrak service from Minneapolis thru Mankato, St. James, Worthington and Kansas City has been put into an interim study committee and will be the subject of hearings along the proposed route this summer.....

THE ROCK ISLAND told the Illinois Commerce Commission May 10 that its two trains should be discontinued, with losses running $1700 a day on each.....

SUMMER CONSIST BOOK shows the SOUTHWEST LIMITED minus its first class diner, and no slumbercoach on the SFZ, but extra cars on several other trains.....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"I foresee a shift to passenger trains from the automobile passenger sector. This shift will be most evident in the intercity travel area of the spectrum. I will be quite frank with you, adding that I hope that this transition will be gradual. We carried 18.6 million passengers last year. We have room for expansion, but we do not yet have the capacity to double or triple that figure."

--Amtrak President Paul Reistrup in talk to Rotary Club of Portland, Oregon, May 3.

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DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

TIMETABLES - Selling "Best of 60's" Ten System TTs - $10. SSAE for new list quarterly. Carl Loucks, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

FREE MAP - OREGON AMTRAK ROUTES PLUS HWY & PARK INFO! WRITE: TRAVEL INFO, OreDOT, SALEM, OR 97310.

Tired of calculating MPH? Rail Speed-O-Graph gives instant MPH based on mileposts. Both sides of 4x9 card. Speeds from 30 to 120mph. Keep several handy. 5 for $1, or $2/dozen. Dan Yaeger, 2239 Ferncliff, St. Louis MO 63122.

20th Century Hobbies, 1034 College Ave, Wheaton IL 60187. 312-682-4460. HO and N scale and accessories. Railroadiana also available.

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